

## YOUTHWORX EAST AFRICA AUGUST NEWSLETTER.



Greetings from the hot, dry and dusty Kampala. While some parts of the world are floating away in the monsoon, our El Nino rains are a distant memory.

When time allows I love to escape the city and camp out in some of our wilderness areas. The best time for me is after sundown when the sky is alive with stars and the bush erupts with noise. Cicadas and frogs compete in choir practice, monkeys argue in the trees and hippos begin to grunt as they forage their nightly tonnage of greens. It is also a great reminder that behind it all is the all powerful creator, in calm, unstressed control.

Colossians 1: 15 to 20 speaks of this supremacy and power, then brings it down to the level of the church. We need to keep in mind who is the head. Our politics, arguments and petty issues seem insignificant when we stop to realise the creator of the universe is our CEO.

As I mentioned last month, in August my focus is on Urban Youth Ministry in East Africa. By the time you read this Collin and Frank will be working with NAYNET in Nairobi. There is a city wide youth weekend with training for youth pastors/workers on the Friday, a concert featuring Israel Houghton on the Saturday and on the Sunday all the Nairobi churches have cancelled their youth services to meet all day for a joint service and celebration at the city stadium. Apart from joining the team to help run these events, we hope to get valuable friendships, ideas and vision from participating.



Here in Kampala we have hands on involvement with the youth ministry of Kampala Baptist Church and Kampala International Church. We also offer relevant training workshops to many city churches and we have a small established network of youth workers/pastors modelled on NAYNET.

Further afield our current work in Burundi is in an urban setting in Bujumbura. There is also a fledgling youth worker network starting there. We are now developing partnership offering resources and training to the Baptist Union churches in Harare, Zimbabwe.

(Although Zimbabwe is outside of the East African region geographically, we are responding to a need for partnership born out of relationship)

Urban Youth Ministry in Africa is exciting and challenging. The pace of western influence and cultural change in African cities is incredible. Access to internet, media, fashion and music is exploding into the lives of city youth. In many African countries the current youth are the first generation to have these things, leaving parents, leaders and pastors bemused, confused and concerned.

On top of this, escalating urban poverty means that many youth can see these changes but cannot afford the lifestyle. Those that can afford are often absorbed by it and end up alienated from the adults in their lives who could offer support and guidance



Let me try and paint a scenario for you that

could be a description of one of thousands of young people we meet and work with:

“Joshua is 19 and an orphan. He lives in a single room in an overcrowded neighbourhood in the poor suburbs of Kampala, with no running water, occasional electricity and less than \$1 a day to supply his needs. He is bright, well educated and saved. Daily he is faced with the challenge of how to feed and clothe himself and yet is bombarded by excess, western media, fashion, drug culture and pornography wherever he goes. Imagine the pressure and temptation he is under. Imagine the challenge of keeping his integrity as a Christian. Imagine the sense of hopelessness and struggle just to exist in a city where the cost of living is sky rocketing and his income is not. Imagine doing this with no parent or adult role model to support and guide you. Imagine how important it is for our YEA team to be a friend to someone like Joshua.

(name and details changed)

YEA must be a prophetic, relevant, down to earth voice to this and subsequent generations.

We must offer training, guidance and advice that helps our youth make the right choices.

We must present Christ and make disciples so that our youth have a firm, secure foundation in a world that feels like shifting sand.

Please stand with us and pray for us as we try to do this. And remember to pray for our core team of volunteers who are themselves urban youth.



August Prayer points:

- Collin and Frank as they link with NAYNET in Nairobi.
- Ian as he takes some of the KIC youth camping.
- Ian and Prosper as they travel to Hoima and Masindi to meet with youth workers there and plan training and conferences.
- VOW as they prepare to travel to Burundi in

September.

- Giscard in Bujumbura as he plans both the youth conference and the concert that VOW will be part of.
- The on going construction of our new office.

The main focus of YEA is discipleship. In September we want to examine what we really mean by this.

What is discipleship in our East African context?

God bless you I look forward to writing again soon.

Ian